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January 1896

My dear Bairns,

Your editor invites me to write to you in the first number of the *L'Unité Pianta* and, as she does not give me any particular subject to write upon, I am going to indulge myself with a general gossip, as there are many things I want to say.

And, first, let me congratulate you on the birth of your Magazine and of your Old Students' Association. I delight greatly in both as evidences of *esprit de corps* and of the enthusiasm which some of you complain that you lack. But then to complain that one lacks shows that one desires, and desiring is more than half-way to having. I greeted your first type-written number with the sort of tender pleasure one has in a grand-child. These efforts of yours show that you are a body, a living body, growing, I hope, not only by accretion from without -- the addition of more and more House of Education students -- but by vital growth from within, the steady increase in purpose, power, and effort in each one of you. Do not let the endless succession of small things crowd great ideals out of sight and out of mind:-

"This not what man Does which exalts him, but what man *could* do," says Browning, and it is one of those profound sayings which should exert a steady influence on our lives. Let us never lose sight of our aims. Think of it -- already House of Education students are educating between two and three hundred children. Work together, let each one labour to produce a human being at his very best, and what a difference those three hundred children will make to the world in the future. It is impossible to put limits to the power and influence of even one good man or woman, so that any one of you, by laying herself out utterly for a single child, may bless the world in unimaginable ways.

But if it is important never to lose sight of what we "would do," so is it well that we should realize that the most trivial incident of the day, the execution of every moment's work, makes for, or away from, the ideal we work for. This, I suppose, is the meaning of the Badge you have chosen with remarkable unanimity. I have found your action in this matter very inspiring. Your deliberate choice of the "humble plant" as best expressing your aims gives me a cheering sense that you realize the meaning of our work and also gives me, for my own part, many helpful thoughts about the meaning of humility. You will smile if I say it is a lofty aim, and yet it is the loftiest possible to us as human beings to endeavour ourselves to copy the "example of that Great Humility." Practically I think this is how it works. To us, who take the Rush for our Badge, there are no little things, no things that do not matter. We know that every letter a child forms is a detriment or a gain to his character. Every dawdling or diligent, every dull or bright, half-hour is not a thing by itself, but becomes part and parcel of the child, of the whole we are labouring to effect. Another thing, I think, our Rush probably means to all of us is, that we work at things both great and small without any thought at all of our own honour and renown. I am glad you have given us this Badge, dear friends. I expect to gain great help from the constant inspiration of it, and I know you will like the idea of helping me in the very way you have all been good enough to say I have helped you. I think, perhaps, that now you are co-workers, labouring together with me for the self-same ends, we shall understand each other more perfectly and draw even more closely together than we did while you were in training, loyal and responsive as I found you every one.

Please write to me fully and often, believing that if you get little in reply it is not for want of love on my part, but because there is really much to do. Your letters cheer me very much. One member writes:- "If I were to tell you the countless little successes (which make the big ones) that I constantly meet with, not so much in teaching as in training, I should fill volumes. I think that part of my education at Ambleside so interesting and, I must say, the methods never do fail. It is charming to work them out, but I almost wish I had quite tiny children to try on."

I dare say you could all send a similar record of experiences, and I imagine there is a sort of artistic pleasure in putting the fine touches to character.

To return to "enthusiasm." The writer of a paper on this subject in your last issue will like to know that other members caught fire from her though she herself complains that she is burning low. X It is astonishing how little fire will kindle a torch, and this is a thought to encourage us in depressed moments if we were not all too healthy minded to have any such moments! But, please remember that enthusiasm is a fire that throws out light and heat at a cost of constant waste of fuel. Do not for a moment suppose that you can warm yourselves and others for months together upon the original stock you brought from Ambleside. Every day new "thoughts that burn" must be supplied or the fire will go out and present the dreariest of all spectacles, a desolate hearth. Where shall we get new ideas? These are, as Wordsworth says of pleasure, "cast in stray gifts through the world, to be found by whoever will seek." Read, not only in The Book, which one cannot read without many life-giving thoughts, but almost any good book, poetry, biography, history, essays, good novels, -- all will supply our need. You will find that if we read thoughtfully and steadily and only that which is worth reading, daily nourishment of stimulating thought will come to us; and, however foreign the subject may be, what we read, if it is worth reading, will help us to do our work better and will give us fresh thoughts to impart to the children. Never be without a really good book on hand. If you find yourself sinking to a dull commonplace level, with nothing particular to say, the reason is probably that you are not reading and, therefore, not thinking. X I think, if you will read and ponder your Parents' Review month by month, you will find that it stimulates your educational thought in many directions and keeps you from drifting into mere routine. There are many other ways of gaining ideas, but I have room to mention only this one.

I fear I am exceeding the space allowed to me so will offer just one other little word of counsel -- study. I know that all good teachers have some study each day in preparing for the next day's work, but, besides this, study some two or three subjects, definitely on your own account. Do not think this a selfish thing to do, because the advantage does not end with yourself. Every hour of definite study enriches your mind and increases your power, so that, the more you study in your spare time, the more there is in you to bestow upon your pupils. I think I have already advised most of you to join the College by Post. I cannot say enough in praise of this most excellent scheme, and I think we are all grateful to the Founder, Miss Petrie (now Mrs. Carus Wilson). There is hardly a subject upon which one cannot get directions, suggestions, examinations, all possible helps to private study; and this, at practically no expense. Communicate with the Vice-President, Miss E. Waller, St. John's Hall, Highbury, London, N., saying what subjects you would like to study. One Divinity subject is incumbent, and I should advise Clews to Holy Writ.

There are so many things to say that I see no reason for stopping for a week to come, but my space will not last out. So with loving New Year's Greetings, which I wish could be face to face,

I am,

Your always affectionate friend,

C. M. MASON.



May 1903.

My Dear "Bairns",

I cannot let you meet without a hearty welcome and loving greetings from me. That you should have thought it well to call a Conference of old students is especially gratifying to me, as it is an evidence of your strong, corporate life, and of your sense that not only has each one of you a responsible post to fill, but that you have together a cause to advance worthy of your most earnest, thoughtful, and self-sacrificing efforts.

As a body you have amply and most loyally fulfilled the intention for which the House of Education is established. Your college is proud of you. Many records reach me of good and faithful work, most intelligent methods, and loyal devotion to duty, and, what is more, of the spirit of love, kindness, and loyalty you carry into the various families where you are employed. One thing that I especially appreciate is your freedom from small gossip about those families, and your loyal and respectful recognition of parents as your chiefs for the time being.

A lady wrote to me the other day:- "One does indeed realise, as one watches her work, what your House of Education training does, and how different the whole tone of the education given is -- one gets rid of that miserable cramming in of facts and condensed analysis! Then it is so nice to be brought into the schoolroom life and interests -- you know one is generally rather resented there and classed among out-of-date machinery."

Another thing I value is the hearty way in which you share the home-life of your pupils in sickness or in health. I know of a good many cases of tender nursing and wise care in difficult circumstances. We do not all get such great chances of being of service, but there are always opportunities, and we can at any rate do some service to the household we are in by being happy. I think you are not a self-pitying set of people, and that you are accommodating, and open to friendly banter -- these things are important in a house. I fear there are just a few of the less qualified and less capable among you, very few indeed, who feel themselves injured if they are required to see that a child washes his hands properly. I should advise these to read Mr. Barrie's The Little White Bird. That will give them an idea of how loving and thoughtful people regard ministrations to children. You cannot do much in the way of personal care because you have other duties which must be done, but some measure of this care will always attach to your work, and indeed, it is one of the privileges of family life.

There are one or two questions which are sometimes raised by students entering on fresh posts which I prefer to leave to mutual agreement -- holidays, for example, and length of notice.

In the first place, you are on what I will call a "favoured nation" footing amongst working women. The following extract from an article on "The Life of a High-School Mistress" in Women's Employment (for February 6th, 1903), illustrates what I mean. After enumerating the advantages of such a position under the headings of interest, independence, and opportunities of influence, the writer enumerates the drawbacks:- "The work is hard, very hard, too hard. The weary, deadening part of it is the corrections -- piles of books to be gone through and marked day after day, so that, by the time they are done, the mind is too jaded for any freshness or originality of thought to be brought to bear on lessons, and so the teaching suffers ... Often the heaviest part of the day's work is done out of school, and many a mistress

works for or five hours or even longer in correction of exercises and preparation of lessons ... If the mistresses had not to spend so many hours in the soul-destroying work of corrections, we should not hear of so many breakdowns ... Salaries are, and have been for years, steadily declining ... Insecurity of tenure is the other special point which must be mentioned as a drawback."

Your work is also profoundly interesting, full of great opportunities for character formation, usually fairly rich in means of culture, conversation, books, pictures &c., and, at the same time, you work under singularly happy and healthful conditions. You share the exercise and recreations of the children, and in all the years of our existence as a college I do not recollect one case of breakdown from over-work; and when I have the pleasure of seeing old students, I rejoice to see them free from the harassed, worn look so common amongst educated working women. The good and well-chosen food of the schoolroom table has a good deal to do with this happy state of things.

Again, as to salary, I believe that governesses who go out from the House of Education, are, caeteris paribus, the best paid among women workers.

It is for these reasons that I think you are on a favoured footing amongst women who work (a most favoured footing amongst women who do not work). But this happy state of things, which I know you appreciate as gratefully as I do, calls for a certain quid pro quo on your part. I do not think, for example, that you have the same claim for long holidays at a given date as the worn-out High-School Mistress. As a matter of fact you do usually get the school holidays, and those of you who do not fall into the ways of the family with cordial good will; but it is well that we should look at the facts of the case, and not try to make unyielding stipulations on taking up a new post. You are almost always received with great kindness and friendliness into the families of your pupils. For this reason I do not think too stringent business arrangements about length of notice are desirable. A gentle and friendly spirit of give and take is your best safeguard. If you are ever aggrieved by "insecurity of tenure," the extract I have quoted shows that you are not the only people so aggrieved. A good governess is a treasure jealously guarded, and, as many of you know from experience, she keeps her post for years. I think you will agree that students of the college receive, on the whole, most generous treatment.

I should like to add a word on the subject of rise of salary. Some people expect such a rise as a right after a few years' work, without showing any addition to their former qualifications. If you think that experience itself is a qualification, I do not find it so regarded. It is always easier for me to place students who have just finished their training, than students who have held posts; and, may I say, there are perhaps three or four rolling stones among the total number of ex-students whom it is almost impossible to place. They go to a post, they leave it, they write (sometimes in an amusingly imperious way) to say they are ready for another. But those of you who chanced to read a letter in the Journal of Education some little time ago, from a lady who had applied for a post as morning governess in London, and found both sides of the street, the doorsteps, the hall, the dining-room



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black with applicants (most of them probably well qualified), will know that not even an Ambleside training, if it is not followed up by good and faithful work, is any security for employment. By the way, I have met one of that London crowd, and am told that the case is not overstated.

Another thing that you must bear in mind as to this question of a rise in salary is that people pay higher salaries to you in the first place than they do to any except to that highly-accomplished person, a foreign "finishing" governess, and, therefore, unless you take real trouble to acquire say a new language, or increased musical power, there is no particular reason for raising your salaries. But I have in my mind only two or three not very successful people. As a rule your employers are generous, and you are by no means grasping.

Should any of you think well to advertise for posts, you must let me know before doing so, in order that I may not send you posts at the same time. I should not like it at all if an offer from me crossed an offer through an advertisement. I do not greatly advise this course. A lady may see that a House of Education student wants a post. She has heard great things about H. of E. governesses, and writes, but the advertiser has little to offer, does not get the post, and does a little to lower the college. It has been well said that if we look upon God as an Extractor and not a Giver, extractors and not givers we shall ourselves become. Now I have reason to believe that my dear "Bairns" recognise generously that they receive "full measure pressed down and running over." Such a recognition makes us generous givers, singularly free from what I call the "trades-union" spirit of reckoning up your services. You are not given to count up jealously the hours you teach and the hours you are with your pupils as if such hours were hours of bondage; rather, I think, that most of you do not consider these matters at all. On the other hand, if any stray person should feel that her little world is too much with her, that she needs some time to herself, do not let the matter become a grievance, but talk it out at once, frankly and kindly, with the mother of your pupils. You will find her, in almost every case, quite open to conviction, and ready to arrange for the leisure you feel you need. Most of you live the family life and share the family recollections so entirely that this sort of thing settles itself.

I am very glad to see from your programme that you are going to discuss the Parents' Review School. You work the School extremely well, and are very loyal and enthusiastic about it: so do a large number of governesses not belonging to our body. But it is to your hands that I feel the School is committed as a Cause. It is our contribution to National Education; and we are about to make a great effort to make its scope and efforts widely known. I had meant to say a good deal to you about the School, but I have promised to prepare a paper for the P.R.S.U. Conversazione in June dealing fully with the subject, with a view of bringing it before the Heads of Schools, and as you will no doubt read that paper I will only now commit the School in toto and as it stands, to your always loyal support.

You will remember that there is no other scheme of education framed upon our great principle that Education is the Science of Relations, and that the more relations a child establishes within each of the groups into which we divide school work, the completer and the happier will that child's life be. Possibly each one of you may feel that she is herself competent to devise a scheme which should give due, just, and ordered opportunities for a child's several affinities. I do not say that any one of you could not do this, but it is a great thing to do, and must be the outcome of a good many

years of thought, research, and experiment. Meantime take the School as you find it, and work for it for all it is worth. Do not pick and choose among the subjects, but give to each its appointed time. The time taken from one subject and given to another is usually time wasted; and in the Practising School, which has more disadvantages to contend with, in the way of weekly change of teachers, than any of you can have, all subjects are covered, nothing is crammed, and the result, when school girls come into the College, is exceptional intelligence and capacity. In the Government "Special Report" upon Preparatory Schools, it is stated by one writer, that boys from the P.R.S. always do well - a compliment for which I think you deserve much credit. One word more and I have done. The question of registration has no doubt come before you. Very few of you could be ranked in "Column B," as having graduated or passed some other of the examinations which are taken as equivalent. Nor am I anxious to have the College recognised as a Training College for persons qualified for "Column B". I think it would mean undue pressure upon you either before or after training, and in either case a drain on the vitality which you owe to your pupils, if theirs is to be a living education. For these examinations mean, in almost every case, a long course of cramming for preliminary examinations which lead up to the final effort. For that reason we have never offered inducements to "girl graduates" to come to us for a shorter term of training, fearing they would be too much exhausted by previous efforts to take in all we have to offer. But I think you need feel no anxiety. You are trained on the lines which parents value for their children, and I think they do not value the rather stereotyped qualifications of the registered teacher: indeed, I have had more applications than usual lately from schoolmistresses for assistants who are not "the usual thing."

It has been said that as all qualified nurses must be registered, so must all qualified teachers; but the cases are different. Medicine is so far an exact science that doctors look for certain definite and limited qualifications in sick nurses. Education covers a far wider field, and is not an exact science. It would be hard to define certain qualifications as the best and most necessary that a teacher can have. You, dear friends, at any rate have a fair field. Your certificates are more and more valued by the public, and I think the good and faithful work that you have done and are doing, gives you and your College a surer place in the public regard than any form of registration.

I should like to add words about the points I always touch on in our farewell talks -- the duty of saving, and the duty of reading, for example; and, above all, the duty of cherishing and sustaining in yourselves the spiritual life, which is all too apt to burn low: but I must not keep you any longer from the work before you.

Let me finish as I began, by saying how greatly touched I am by the tender loyalty which brings you to confer under the shadow of the old "House". God grant that you may go back with higher aspirations, quickened enthusiasms, and increased vitality of body, mind, and spirit.

Your always affectionate friend,

(Signed) C.M. MASON.



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COPY.  
L'UMILE PIANTA.  
1907-1909.

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LETTER FROM MISS MASON

New Inn,  
Clapham, Yorks.

My dear Friends,

It grieves me not to be with you to say the few words of welcome which, as it is, I must write, and trust to your chairman's kind offices.

In reading the Christian Year for this morning (Easter Monday) I was greatly reminded of you:-

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"Go up and watch the new-born rill  
Just trickling from its mossy bed,  
S|treaking the heath-clad hill  
With a bright emerald thread.

"Canst thou her bold career foretell,  
What rocks she shall o'erleap or rend,  
How far in ocean's swell  
Her freshening billows send?"

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Must such bright emerald threads are you, each having her own course, but all tracable to this your mountain home, and all drawing inspiration from the life you led here. Perhaps there is a certain fitness in the fact that we live among the hills and we may be placed here in the good providence of God partly in order that Alma Mater should always be with you "agreen thought"! This may be a reason of which you are only half conscious for coming here to confer from time to time. May you indeed draw life, freshness, pureness, knowledge, impetus, and inspiration from the old sources.

You are like mountain streams making your way into the plains in a very definite sense, because, though the mountains are for delight and inspiration, it is in the plains men live and work; and you have your share (perhaps next in importance to that of the parents) in producing men and women who will do much to affect our national character in the future. It is a great trust. I suppose we all feel drawn to work, as did our Master, among the poor. But it may be that to work among those who will in their turn labour for working people on a wider scale and with more ample success than we could hope for, is to work in a special way for the coming of the kingdom.

Now that Keble has suggested the thought to me, it is curious how the reports I get of you from time to time testify to the sort of mountain stream qualities, if I may call them so, that I have



a/ indicated. You bring life with you into the schoolroom, into the family, and sometimes it trickles through the neighbourhood. The keen intellectual life of the schoolroom is exceedingly wholesome for the children and for you because it is a life which requires no artificial stimulants. Delight in knowledge, delight in books, carries children forward, and in that delight they enter upon one of the richest domains open to mankind. The freshness of the schoolroom revives the family. The books and topics of the schoolroom afford delightful talk for the luncheon table or the walk. I do not mean dreary talks about marks and places and all that is properly called "shop", but talk about books and men and events, about pictures and poems, in fact, the sort of impersonal conversation we all enjoy. Of course, no life lives upon itself; daily intellectual bread is necessary to sustain our vitality, and, though, much of this is supplied to you in your children's studies, I am sure you feel the necessity for steady reading with notes and extracts in your common-place book. I say I am sure, because the bright eye, and intelligent countenance, the keenness and alertness you bring with you to your conferences show that you are not suffering from that depressing ailment, intellectual inanition. It is evident that you do not hang over fires, lean up against walls, play the mischief-maker in a house by encouraging others to talk of petty offences, and, in fact, are not tempted to the resources employed by persons who have nothing to think about, and so make matter for their minds out of their own small grievances or mischievous talk about others. — the sort of thing table-side students think disloyal. The constant renewal of intellectual life makes for freshness and gaiety both in and out of the schoolroom; and, more especially do you get this refreshment in your out-of-door work with the children — a source of never-ceasing delight both for you and them; this is a joy that never grows stale, but, like the joy of the intellectual life, it depends on our adding fuel to the flame. Each year must find us closer observers, more thorough students. I wonder, do you give much attention to astronomy? One of your number has written a charming book for children on the subject which will, I hope, be published and included in the school work. And are any of you prepared to take notes for the Migration Committee and the Ontological Society? But your delight in nature is so great that I need not press the point. It is curious how often people ask in these days for students who like walking and have nature knowledge.

out- Our mountain beck is pure, and pureness is not a passive state. It depends upon unceasing upward movement, and upon that power, which the natural beck does not possess, of continual guarding itself against the inflow of earth-soil. We speak of bad things, whether moral or physical, as "catching," but we forget that pureness also is catching, the pure in heart convey purity without consciousness or intention. Your pureness will provide a pure atmosphere for the

1. See L'Utile Pianta, February, 1909.

children to breathe in. I do not mean simply the purity which would not endure the soil of reading a divorce case or a loose novel, which turns away its eyes from beholding any coarseness in tale or play; the person who has this habit of mind conveys it to her pupils and they grow up with a distaste for that which is unlovely. But besides this purity, which is more or less of the flesh, there is also a spiritual pureness which sees God; and also sees persons and things in a true light. I need not tell you that there is a "common" way of looking at everything - a way of bringing everybody down to a lower level, of spoiling the chamber of the mind as a room is spoiled by some vulgar ornament. Beware of the commonness which quite good and sensible people may fall into; the quality of our lives depends upon the point of view from which we regard circumstances and events. To quote an everyday example, ~~may I say that the~~ may I say that the children's examinations are intended to be a training in integrity, simplicity, and that quiet way of accepting things which mark a person of fine character. Therefore when I hear that children were disappointed in not getting a question on this or on that subject, or in the marks they receive, or any other of the little things one is inclined to fuss over I am sorry, because I feel that the children are missing the good of a rather unusual and fine experience. It might be well if you explained our point of view to the parents of your pupils: that the examination itself affords fine lessons in conduct and that it is more important for the children that they should not fuss about marks than that they should get the highest marks. Such a matter as this also belongs to pureness, sometimes described as delicacy of mind, which affects our way of looking at everything.

The mountain beck has come from afar and has gathered much on the way; and it gives me particular pleasure to find that social questions will occupy some of your attention during this conference. We are living in wonderful times, when people seem to me ready as never before to go and do the right if only they can see what is right. Specially are we engaged in a crusade to recover, not the tomb wherein the body of Christ was laid, but that very body itself in the persons of the poor and afflicted for whom He died. It behoves us all, and behoves us especially who are engaged in education, to keep our eyes open as to the social movements about us; to understand and rejoice in the Children's Act; not only to read about but to ponder such questions as those of Unemployment, Workmen's Insurance, Small Holdings, Temperance Movements, Women's Suffrage, Continuation Schools, the United Service League, the various Giel Guilds of Help, and more than all (for this we are specially commanded), missionary work. We are not able to support a Settlement of our own, but one of our number works a Settlement in Hoxton, which we might very well annex by giving it regular definite help. It is not quite easy to make ourselves at home in questions of vital concern to the nation. Two dangers beset our path. In the first place the air is full of fads, born



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But do not take it for granted. There is nothing easier than to stagnate, and it is possible to stagnate unconsciously. In the old days the Church recognised Seven Deadly Sins, and one of these was Sloth. We do well to be on our watch against this forgotten sin, because I believe it is one which besets teachers especially. They fall into a certain routine and the mere habit of doing things in a given way carries conviction. We reason that because we do it so, that is the right way to do it, and so we get into ways of intellectual sluggishness. Our particular method of teaching has its own temptations. Just because our principle is that the children rather than the teacher shall do the work, we may be tempted to sit by and see them do it, forgetting that it is our part to give impetus to their thought, not by much talk, but by our own alertness of mind, ready sympathy, and thorough knowledge of the subject. The child who admires a fine action should be able to look up and see that you are also admiring; where he disapproves, he should see that you are with him or that you can show him to be wrong. This constant outgoing of mind and heart, rather in our attitude towards the subjects we are teaching than in our words, constitutes the sort of steady impetus which carries the children along with you in the pursuit of knowledge and virtue, as when two or three join hands in running downhill. x

But the impetus you bring with you is not necessarily confined to making the work of your pupils "go." I know you do all you can to "spread the light." I often hear of talks in which one or another has taken pains to make our principles known with delightful results. Some form Reading Circles, some address meetings of one sort or another. What you do will, of course, depend a good deal on the wishes of that important person your "Postess," but it is worth while to keep it in mind that you have a definite work to do in this respect, and then to do what comes in your way.

One other quality you bring from your mountain tops - inspiration. But a man does not inspire once in a lifetime or once a day. He keeps himself alive by regular acts of inspiration. You have come here now, no doubt, for a little of the old mountain air, for a revival of the old impressions and aspirations. But we must draw from our sources at all times. Your definite and distinct code of educational principles must be kept fresh in your minds by reading and re-reading your books and pamphlets and reports. It really is not an easy thing to keep the whole in mind. I often forget myself, and have to go through a laborious course of thought to find why it is best to do this rather than the other. Because you are pioneers in bringing before the world principles of Education, the success of which you demonstrate very fully in your good and faithful work, it is necessary that you should keep your principles well in view and be always ready to show the reason for any particular theory or practice.

But this is only your professional inspiration. You do not

of zeal without knowledge; and the person who lets himself be dominated by a fad, whether in politics, religion, or health, loses value; his opinions are discounted and his principles are not trusted because the fact of taking up a fad betrays a want of balance. May I, in this connection, say a word about an educational fad, and warn you of the danger of using "suggestion" as an educational instrument. Of course you can use "suggestion" and influence in such a way as to make a child seem very good and very fond of you personally. The mischief is that when you are done with him he will have no will power to exercise self-government and self-direction. But I know I need not warn you of this danger. House of Education Students are open and above board in their dealings with children. They bid rather than wheedle, and are simple in their ways. The other difficulty in your path will be that most social questions have become party questions. I do not wish to offer you a counsel of perfection, but, for my own part, I feel that as an educator I may not be a party woman - that is, may not take up any side so exclusively as to be prejudiced against or bitter towards those on the other side. The question of party politics will not be for you to settle. Most parents think it their right to pass their own views to their children and these views I have no doubt you will treat with the most serious respect. But you will also remember that children are by nature fiery partisans, and you will best serve them by showing them good reason for the faith that is in them, and also, by giving them a fair representation of the other side; by letting them know, too, that in England we think it best for both the great parties to have the Government of the State in turn so that the nation may have the benefit of the wise opinions and the wise men on either side. But to do this requires knowledge; and I commend to you your careful reading such reliable works on social problems as may come in your way. Just now a digest of the Report of the Poor Law Commission would give you much material for thought and for discussion with your pupils. Mrs. Bosanquet and Mr. Beveridge write wisely and well.

In your teaching of history you will have occasion to bring the past to bear on the present, and you will notice that the books for the various classes are arranged with a view to this practical sort of teaching. I rather think your aim should be, not to give your children ready-made opinions on this side or on that, but to secure their intelligent interest in a wide range of reading designed to make them think. In this way they will, by slow degrees and unconsciously, form just opinions for themselves. There is rather a tiresome small boy in Funch just now who plays havoc with his father's opinions. Little Arthur's Guide to Knowledge is worth reading for its underlying suggestion - children do reflect, and it is well to give them abundant material.

One of the main advantages of a source in the mountains is that a stream comes down with a certain impetus, movement, go; and this movement and brightness I believe you carry into all your work whether in the schoolroom, at table, at play, or in the fields.



need to be reminded of the wider, fuller inspiration to be derived from great books, poetry and prose, from great pictures, from the talk of those who think greatly, from continual converse with nature, and, above all, from the direct inspiration of the Divine Spirit who openeth our ear, also, morning by morning.

We think of you and your work with great joy and thankfulness, for are not you our "living epistles" and does not each one of you stand not only for the whole college, but for the whole of the "Parents' Union"? That is how you are known and read of all men. Your failings are not regarded as yours, but as those of the body to which you belong. But it is not often by blame you are known: it is by generous praise. People write to us for governesses, saying that other mistresses have accomplishments but you have character and know how to train character, and, indeed, I think, nobody ~~but~~ had more reason to rejoice in its members than we have to rejoice in you. May you go on and prosper, "giving no offence in anything that the ministry" (our particular ministry of education) "be not blamed: but in all things approving ourselves..... by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left."

I am always, dear friends,

Yours faithfully and affectionately,

CHARLOTTE M. MASON.

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IV

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L'UMILE PIANTA.  
1914-1916.

THE CONFERENCE

Opening Address

My very dear Friends,

ing/ It gives me particular delight to welcome you here just now not only as beloved Old Students, but as staunch fellow-workers, labouring for what one of us - a P.N.E.U. member - describes as a new Revival of Learning.

- / The note of joyousness which I usually find in Old Students' letters and in the examination papers of their children is to my mind the note of the revival we are working for, because it is almost always joy in books, in knowledge. You remember that delightful schoolmaster of the Middle Ages, who called his Mantuan school La Giocosa, because it was in truth a house of joy, the joys being those of plain living and high thinking, and of great delight in learning, joys shared by prince and peasant, for Vittorino did not believe that the love of knowledge belonged to any one class. Your little schoolrooms often remind me of La Giocosa, in fact, each of them is La Giocosa, because the children are vitalized by their delight in knowledge.

o/ There are various signs that whatever little secrets we may have arrived at in the way of imparting this joy, one of the greatest in life, we shall be called upon to share with other teachers in schools for various classes and ages; indeed, your hearts would burn within you if you could know of the avidity with which elementary teachers, for example, are gathering up stray hints as to our methods. This is how a schoolmistress wrote the other day to a mother whose daughter had been brought up in the P.U.S. (not by one of you, though!). "The teachers," this lady says, "speak of a certain enthusiasm in her work, most helpful to the teachers, and infectious to the class as a whole."

Truly we have every incentive to labour in this crusade for, let us call it, the Revival of Learning. But then it is a crusade, and I need not remind you that those who go crusading bear a cross. It was said of one of you the other day that, "The true spirit of inner discipline is there!" and I am happy in believing that the words apply to you all. But our cross is something more than the common discipline of the Christian life. Here is where I think it lies. Many of you are brilliant teachers, with attractive personalities, open to that temptation to fill the stage, as it were, common to all teachers. It is so easy and delightful to



explain and expound, so difficult to carry the children on to personal effort by the force of silent sympathy and that love of knowledge common to you and to them. I am, as you know, jealous of the play of what is called personal influence, which is, I think, largely accountable for the fact that the love and pursuit of knowledge so commonly ends with school life; but I think we are at one about this matter, and should like you to read a paper read at our late Darlington Conference, which indicates, I think, a new departure for our coming of age.

I believe we shall all feel the call to a renewed effort in grasping our principles and to increased zeal in making them known. [Here Miss Mason's paper, "Trop de Zele," was read to us. It will appear in the Parents' Review.]

It will interest you to know the steps by which the kind of work I have indicated is being taken up by two or three members of our Union. Mrs. Franklin heard the Headmaster of a great public school say to an audience that, "He did not know how to teach English." I may say in passing, that the teaching of English in that school is very brilliant, but it is quite possible that the masters do not understand that it is by reading and not by teaching that a knowledge of English is acquired. But to go on with our story, Mrs. Franklin and our General Organising Secretary made a noble offer to go and explain to the masters what our methods were. They received a hearty welcome, and the seed they sowed is germinating very satisfactorily. Mrs. Steinthal again found that elementary teachers in Yorkshire were greatly dissatisfied with the manner of education they were giving. The Inspector of the district is a friend of hers, and she brought him here. He probably taught as much as he learned from us, or more, more, but the immediate outcome was a meeting of a dozen schoolmasters and mistresses at Mrs. Steinthal's house, to see papers and hear talk, in which Miss Drury gave great assistance. This happened last term, and already in a neighbouring town some 200 headmasters and mistresses arranged themselves for a lecture from Mrs. Steinthal on our methods, which was listened to with profound interest, and is likely to have results. The School Board of a big town seems willing to give grants for our books, and numbers of teachers are keen to watch the experiment of working on our programmes which has started in two or three schools. The teachers speak of it as new life.

I know that as you hear all this zeal inflames your hearts, but it must be zeal characterised as in the cases I have mentioned by great diffidence and skill in waiting on opportunity. If it should come in your way to become acquainted with the H.M. Inspector of your neighbourhood, you might get a chance to introduce the subject, which I am sure you would do wisely. Your children's examination papers would be an immense help, coupled with the assurance that hundreds of children are doing the same

work, probably equally well. Of course your first care would be to interest the lady whom you call your "postess," and she would help you in the rest, perhaps inviting (though the insap inspector or director) some of the teachers of the neighbourhood to see our books, hear of our methods, and to see something of the children's work, chiefly old examination papers. It is an interesting fact that in most of the counties of England we have the means at hand for this sort of missionary organization, but I should like to urge on you the importance of working through H.M. Inspectors.

We women have a headlong way of rushing at things which does not always make for success, whereas the tact and even the very slowness to move of important officials tell in the long run, especially in dealing with teachers, who know that they are accomplishing a great work, and are themselves slow to move. I need not tell you to write to the office of the College for any help, papers etc., you may be in need of.

One more cautionary word. I should rather you did not take up this matter as a "cause" with any degree of violence or perturbation or any excitement which should lead to the neglect of those "few sheep in the wilderness" - the children in your own Gloucestershire. But I know that such words of caution are quite unnecessary, and commit to your wisdom and discretion a great cause with great confidence.

- Always affectionately yours, C. M. MASON.

N.B. I believe that one of H.M. Inspectors is preparing a report on our work for the Board of Education. It might be as well to wait before we take any active steps until it is possible to make use of this report, which will be noticed in the Parents' Review.



1916

## LETTERS

Copy.

House of Education,  
Ambleside.  
November 28th, 1916.

My dear "Bairns,"

Miss Gray's letter, telling me of the proposal to hold a Students' Conference held in the spring of 1917, interests me greatly.

In the first place, it is a long time since I have had the pleasure of seeing you. In the next, we are at a moment in the history of the P.N.E.U., when the energies of all its members are urgently needed, and the help of my dear "Bairns" will be expected on all sides. Two or three students have already written to the Office; asking how they can help; three more students are already in communication about elementary schools in their own neighbourhoods.

I want us all to be prepared for the same plan of campaign, so that we may all work together as one in this great forward movement, which means - have you realised it? - the education of the country, and perhaps of the Empire, for we have already had an inquiry for a large school in India.

I wish you could all go and see the Drighlington School and what it has done in 2½ years; but as that is not possible, I can only say that I am told it is like a fairy-tale, and that (in confidence) our P.N.E.U. Schools have a "blue tea-pot" to live up to!

I know you have all read, but have you all studied the three pamphlets? In No I you will find a summary of teaching you know well, a summary that may help you to tabulate the points that must be dwelt on in talking of the matter to teachers. I enumerate them again in a still more concise form:

All children are persons of mind, and can deal with knowledge.

Therefore, children's minds must be allowed to work.

Therefore, self-education is the only form of education that can have any lasting value.

Children have an unlimited power of attention when they are not distracted by questions, the personality of the teacher or anything that comes between them and knowledge.

The teacher's concern is with the behaviour of mind. "The mind can know nothing except what it can put in the form of an answer to a question put by the mind to itself," and it works by, "What next? What next?" Narration is not memory work, but mind work, and cannot be accomplished without concentrated attention and consequent assimilation.

The addition which the Drighlington School has made to what the working of the method has established in other schools is that ALL children have these powers, not only children who come from cultivated homes. Also, the Drighlington children have excelled in the power of narration, narrating easily after the single reading of two or three pages.

I think your own teaching must be examined in the light of these facts, because your schoolrooms and classes will be cynosure of many eyes, and I know you will like to have a synopsis of propaganda work set before you, and therefore I am especially glad that it has been decided to have a conference here.

With much love to you all - Yours always affectionate friend.

Charlotte M. Mason.



VI  
COPY.

STUDENTS' ANNUAL MEETING

July 7th, 1917.

Miss Mason's Paper.

My dear friends and colleagues, let me thank you for inviting me to speak to you to-day. I have much to say, but am certain that you will hear from a later speaker all that matters - a tale of thrilling interest, the little preface to which unfolded itself about this time last year in a village in South Wales where a council of three assembled. You will hear, as I have said, the gist of the matter from one who has initiated and cherished each development of the work, and who will, I hope, take you from place to place, from school to school, and give you some idea of our fears and hopes and of the exceeding great reward we have already found in a large number of schools.

You will notice that I give you a new title, and may wonder why. Of course we have always been colleagues, because we have the same principles at heart, are labouring towards the same end and in the same way. But a conviction has been borne in upon us which gives a new meaning to this fellowship of ours. We appear to hold principles which are discoveries in education. I am not at all sure that great discoveries fall to the lot of very able or worthy persons. One has never heard great things of Signor Marconi, for instance. It is in fact, the discovery, and not the discoverer, that is of consequence to the world. Now discoveries, whether in the region of mind or of matter, come about, Coleridge has elucidated for us in a sentence with which I think you are familiar: "We can recall no incident of human history that impresses the imagination more deeply than the moment when Columbus on an unknown ocean, first received that startling fact, the change of the magnetic needle! How many such instances occur in History, where The Ideas of Nature (presented to chosen minds by a higher Power than Nature herself) suddenly unfold, as it were in prophetic succession, systematic views destined to produce the most important revolutions in the state of Man!" And it is not only to laws of Nature that this principle applies.

I dwell upon this point because it is only by realising how far we work on a few newly observed laws of mind that you will be able to show the difference between our work and educational work in general. We have been working on the lines of these discoveries for

a quarter of a century: great results have been acknowledged in hundreds of letters, but our work has hitherto been merged in the general sum of progress, and what better could we desire? But we have come to a new stage in our development with Mrs. Petrie's successful introduction to the P.U.S. into the Drighlington School some three years ago. Before this it was possible to suppose that if a child were at home in a wide field of knowledge, and showed unusual keenness and power of attention, it was because he was a clever child, from a cultivated home, who had had a capable teacher. But when it appeared that the children of illiterate parents, handicapped by a poor vocabulary, could do the same work at the same age in the same time as the more brilliant children of better homes, why, it became evident that we had found some of the "more things" that "Hamlet" hints at. The general results, in fact, are such as have never been attained before except by a genius here and there; and educational authorities, men of letters and scholars, as well as able and experienced teachers, recognize with frankness and enthusiasm that we have found the lever which Archimedes was in search of - a lever to raise the world!

Now great riches or unusual powers are attended by corresponding responsibilities, and that is why I am at pains to bring before you our position with regard to public education. I know the generous devotion you are capable of, and that you are on the instant prepared to take work in schools, elementary or other.

But I doubt if that is the work for which you and I are called upon. The heads of schools of every sort require a special qualification which you do not possess, and also, though this is of less importance, they are not prepared to pay the salaries which you receive. But if you may not teach the schools, what I think may soon be the case is, that you will be regarded as authorities on education in your several neighbourhoods, whether by teachers, managers, or Inspectors.

For this reason we should all be ready to render a reason for the hope that is in us: it is a great hope - the hope of starting children in life with keen interest in the natural world, intellectual delights and resources, delight in art, moral enthusiasm and religious knowledge and devotion. You have felt and known what it is to see the daily fulfillment of this hope in your own children. But now a great door and effectual is opened to us; what was more or less individual is on the way to become national, and working men's children are in many places getting the full and delightful life your children in the home school-room. They are, as a matter of fact, getting it very fully for a curious reason which I should like you to ponder. The highly intelligent teachers of their schools come to our method as a



new thing which produces marvellous results. Evidence convinces them that children can, after a single reading, narrate a long passage, leaving out nothing, but putting touches of imagination which show that they have visualised the scene or process. Now this, to teachers accustomed to get a very little knowledge in by dint of much labour, seems to be a sort of white magic, even when they know that such results are obtained by following a few of the laws of mind. They know that they have never had such results before, and that they can only get them by grasping the principles and following the instructions we lay down. This they do fully and exactly, and educational authorities write to us often that they have never seen under similar conditions such work as these children turn out.

Now, you are so used to our principles and methods that there is no room for surprise; and it is just possible you may let a lesson period slip by pleasant, interesting talk about the subject, in question and answer, the reading of extracts and showing of pictures. All this is very interesting; but the children may not have performed throughout the lesson the act of knowing which results in clear, consecutive narration. X

You will best advance our great cause by knowing, say, half a dozen of our principles thoroughly, expressing them concisely, and practising them steadily with your pupils. Though you are familiar enough with them in the Home Education Series and, I hope, in the three pamphlets "A Liberal Education," may I sum up a few of the points which you will, I think, make headway by treating as discoveries, because everyone knows how important it is that children should read good books, but perhaps we hold the secret of how to get many good books read and known in school hours.

X We recognise that children have naturally astonishing power of attention. That they attend to what appeals to them, that is to whatever offers the nourishment their minds require. That mind requires a "mixed diet." Therefore, they should have a varied, liberal curriculum. That mind does not assimilate bare facts (though these may be memorized), but requires its proper "diet" to be served in literary form. Therefore, school books should have some literary value. That hard words and new names present no difficulties, for children have a natural pleasure in acquiring their own language. That self-education is the only education. Therefore, for children to master certain pages from their own books at a single reading makes for rapid progress, and the possibility of covering much ground.

The single reading is the condition upon which it is possible to give entire attention.

But children may listen to lessons or read their own books, and yet not know, because "the mind can know nothing but what it can produce in answer to a question put by the mind to itself." This question is, "What comes next?" which children unconsciously put to themselves in the act of narrating.

Therefore, this act of narrating becomes at the same time the act of knowing on the part of the children without which their lessons have little permanent value, useful as occasional oral lessons are in introducing a subject, elucidating points, and summing up. Children taught in this way write good forcible English with freedom, and spell well on one condition - that so soon as they can read, they read their own books to themselves. The kindness of his teacher in reading his lesson to a child who can read naturally results in bad spelling. X

Other governesses, many of them, I daresay, University women, meter the instructions as carefully as do the elementary teachers, with the result of pleasing columns of figures in the examination reports, though I doubt if these teachers are as successful as you in enriching the lives and developing the characters of their pupils.

But let us suppose you sitting duly prepared, both in yourselves and in your children, how are you to approach the great adventure? You hear of the old students in the North and old students in the West doing great things, but where is your chance? You may indeed be casting bread upon the waters, which will return after many days - when your pupils will work for the cause of education. On the other hand, you may be able to interest your "Postess" even while the war is making her life very full; she may invite educational people, (school managers, inspectors, etc.) to tea and talk, and you may have a chance to tell some of the things you will hear from our dear Organizing Secretary, and perhaps, to unfold some of our principles; perhaps she may make it easy for you to meet the teachers of such and such a school, or, or - one does not know what, but opportunities come to us when we are ready. However it be, I know you will not neglect to "feed My lambs" with the spiritual and intellectual food they are hungering



for. A very good friend of ours in Yorkshire calls those who carry our good news "apostles," and never was any cause more blessed in ~~fewer~~ fervent and instructed "apostles" scattered far and wide. Go forth, prosper, dear friends, and may our God "establish that thing which He has wrought in us."

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Extract - Miss Mason's Letter to the Old Students at the  
Annual Meeting, 1918.

July 3rd, 1918.

My dear "Bairns,"

I am very glad that you are meeting in London, if only a few of you can manage it. Please invite me to be in your midst for we are called to great work, and the more we are of one heart and one mind the better. Besides, I am so much attached to you and so proud of you dear people that I desire to be with you in the spirit if not in the flesh.

Travelling is not easy for anyone just now, and perhaps unnecessary travelling is not right, so I have not been surprised to have no application for "Fairfield" from old students. You are all doing what is right - that is, either spending your holidays at home, and helping in some sort of war work, or staying to be of use in your posts. That is the chief thing we all desire in these days, to be of use, and you will like to know that I receive many assurances from your dear "Postesses" of your bright, good-tempered usefulness in a thousand ways. Many a household where the father is "at the front," "the maids" on the land" is cheered and helped by your gaiety, capability, and readiness for all sorts of work. One student tells me that she "grooms" the pony.

Another thing that I am grateful to you for is that you stay where you are. I know that the temptation to give up teaching and take to War work is very great. You felt that in your pleasant schoolrooms, in your happily ordered lives, you are not putting up with enough to be really doing "your bit." But you know our old saying, "Nothing can act but where it is." and our task is to find full scope where we are for all the serviceableness that is in us. I am enclosing a passage from "The Heart of Alsace" on this subject, which expresses all that I feel as to the importance of educating two or three children.

"A class of thirty to forty pupils; to the teacher they are almost an anonymous crowd. There is a curriculum to be carried out, marks to be given, discipline. Teachers and pupils meet and part. The years pass, and soon make them strangers.

"Two pupils. The teacher lives <sup>with</sup> them. He becomes their friend. He divines their thoughts, their reticences. He gives lessons, but he also converses with them, seated on the corner of the table. In this way ties are formed that last a lifetime, and it is a

joy to meet again later those to whom one has given the best of oneself" The Heart of Alsace, by B. Vallotin

Then our work is extending so wonderfully in all directions that you may well feel that you are doing national work in helping us. A while ago we had a little ceremony, the planting of an oak to celebrate our fiftieth elementary school. That was the intention, though really the schools numbered over seventy - 10,500 children doing our work, programme by programme.

We want to spread the great happiness of our work among all the children in the country, rich and poor, and in every neighbourhood there are opportunities of making our principles known. If anybody feels that she has not spoken on the subject to her "postess" I think she should not put off doing so. This time of war anxiety is the very time to turn people's thoughts to a subject of as great importance. Yes, fully as great, for we may not rest till we have "built Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land," and some of us work from the trenches and some from the schoolroom.

If you are not clear how to set about outside work of this sort (some of you have done great things already) write, of course, to Miss Parish!

Another way in which you have already helped the College enormous ly and in which I am begging for your further help, is in finding us students.

The present capital class of juniors consists almost entirely of old pupils, or sisters, or cousins, or friends of former students. Indeed, that is how the College has always been supported. "Ye are our epistle." The post brings every week more than enough applications to supply the Second-year Students, and each of these, whether in school or family, opens the prospect of delightful work; so it is a pity to say we have no one for such a post or for such a time. So please send us all the nice girls you know. I know you fill your pupils with the idea of being trained, and very nice students they make. Girls of every class are looking for work, so I think you need not fear that your girls belong to a class which does not undertake paid work. That is not the case. I heard this morning from a friend who told me that her under-gardener is the grand-daughter of a viscount. Children are better worth while than cabbages - pace the Food Controller!

One thing more. I think you should prepare yourselves to speak, whether on our principles, our work, or the College. The Parents' Review gives information from time to time.

I should like to tell you what pleasure your loyalty to each other, and to the College gives me. Whether you are still employed in our great work, or are married, with babies of your own, or are otherwise engaged. We are all one body still.

I should like to tell you what is to me the spiritual note of this most distressing war. "Thy kingdom come" is, is, I think,



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more the motif of this than of any war the world has seen. The "Order of the Day" is, for each of us, Service for others. We are all "in the Services," service in our work as well as outside our work, and in order to service, Discipline.

I wonder may I tell you of two little daily prayers that I find helpful, both as to service and discipline: "Grant that I may both perceive and know what things Thou wouldst have me to do, and also, may have grace and power faithfully to perform the same." and "Bring every thought of my heart into subjection to the obedience of Christ. This has grown into a very long letter, and yet I have not half told you of all my love for you, and of all my interest in your very various work.

Wishing you a very happy meeting, I am your always affectionate friend.

Charlotte M. Mason.



BRITISH BOND

COPY.

MISS MASON'S LETTER AT THE OPENING  
OF THE CONFERENCE

My dear Friends,

It is very delightful to me to welcome you here once more after the searching days through which we have all passed, and "here" has a peculiarly pleasant meaning this year through the generous thought of our kind friend Mr. Lewis. It seems to me, too, that the occasion is rather a solemn one. No doubt each of you felt that you received your vocation when first you made up your mind to enter the College, and nobly you have, as a body, responded to the call. Everyone of you has good and faithful work to her name; you have been wonderfully loyal, trustful, enthusiastic. You have won a good name for yourselves and the College, so much so that the demand for House of Education Students is immeasurably beyond the supply and many new openings are presenting themselves.

But since you were here last a very great vocation has come to us all. I notice that one of your discussions is to be upon the question of, How to keep up to date. Now the curious thing that has happened to us is that our achievement goes beyond other people's aspirations, so that we are necessarily not only up to date, but in advance. But, you will say, what about the necessary public examinations? Should not our pupils be able to pass these? For the present, no doubt, some final examination is necessary.

For girls who do not intend to take up a public career our leaving certificate, which will not be lightly given, is a sufficient assurance. Others must give, say, a term or two at the end of their school course to preparation for the London Matriculation, for that in a couple of terms at the most our new matriculation class will be prepared to pass. We shall probably have such a class at work during each of our terms for the future, and shall be glad to welcome any of your pupils for the final course. Our object in taking this course under our own supervision is to secure that until the age of seventeen the girls shall read steadily in Form V or VI of the P.U.S. The objection is not to public examinations per se but to the years of cram in preparation for the last effort precluding intelligent work on broad lines. At the same time children who have not kept up to the P.U.S. standard throughout their course will have little chance of this sort of success at the end.

But this is a digression from the statement that we are not only up to date but in advance, both in reach and achievement. No one disputes the fact, though I believe some school authorities are inclined to think that we obtain our results by unfair means! But you all know the fine integrity with which the school/papers

do/a/ are worked. The practising school, as you know, is at some disadvantage because every class changes its teacher every week; but the disadvantage is more apparent than real; the children ~~ed~~ good work, thanks to our dear friend, Miss Miller, as you will see by their last set of examination papers, and every pupil does the right work for her age. But I know very well what strenuous effort on the part of the teachers is necessary to keep a certain level of attainment in every subject, especially in English Grammar, Latin and Mathematics. We know it can be done and done in the allotted time, because there are always people who do it, but these subjects are not popular in the home or with the pupils, so all the more credit is due to the teachers who persevere.

^/ By the good hand of our God upon us, certain secrets as to the nature and behaviour of mind have been discovered to us - (or to me) which call us to a noble vocation and give us a great role in the education of the future. I need not say that there is no credit due to us: it is the usual way of divine Providence to work with the weak things of the earth; and it will only move us to walk softly, to go reverently. If we realise that we are deliberately 7/ failed to do that which has not hitherto been done in the world; that is, to make education free as air, not in opportunity only, but in possession, to every child of whatever class or environment - a liberal education in the fullest sense of the word.

"Feed my lambs," our Master has said, and we feed them with such food as they consume with delight and grow upon and are glad. Education in this sort is no respecter of persons; the world has had as yet no opportunity of seeing what an educated democracy may bring forth, a realisation, we believe, of the angels' prophetic message - "Peace on earth and goodwill towards men."

But I am not at all so well qualified to act as harbinger of these good tidings as are some of your own body. There was a man sent from God, sent with a purpose, and the two apostles whom we send forth surely have a divine mission, so persuasive are they and such new life do they carry with them, new hopes, new joys, new prospects, and perennial happiness. You know about these things in your own schoolrooms, each of which is La Giocosa. We have known of this new joy in the kingdom of knowledge and have led happy children into its precincts for as long as some of you have lived. But principles of education are only valid when their application is universal. Now the teachers and parents of children of the educated classes (the very term is a condemnation) naturally believe in those blessed words, heredity and environment. The children took to knowledge it was supposed as ducks to the water, because it was in them by descent and habit, and nobody thought of saying, "Yes, but children under the same



conditions otherwise do not find knowledge delightful unless they are under this particular teaching."

*effecting*  
I sat down under this disability (to teach the children of the people) and knew that we were ~~offering~~ little until we could test our principles on the children of "everyman"; and then, as you know, Mrs. Steinthal came to the rescue. She believed in P.U.S. utterly; she was urgent about Elementary Schools; brought up the very sympathetic Inspector of the West Riding to talk the matter over; called a meeting of elementary teachers at her house in Ilkley which Miss Drury addressed, and - the end was - our pioneer school at Drighlington. Notwithstanding the doubts and hesitations which attended the first plunge, the children did wonders. What one school could do all schools could do and at our last reckoning we had 10,000 children working our programmes individually in elementary schools. *That* was a year ago, since which we have grown continuously. These children do not cover nearly all the subjects that you take up, but what they undertake they do in a way which would delight you. Think of the magnanimous, dutiful, public-spirited citizens we are preparing for the future! Am I not right in saying that we are called to a great vocation? But in a vocation numbers do not count, there is no human measure for the work done in many a home schoolroom with a single child. Just at this moment a particularly able member of your body has preferred work with one rather "backward" child when many opportunities offered; I suppose that is her vocation. You have two capacities to fill, as individuals, and as members of a body; because each of you has to bear on her dear shoulders both the Union and the P.U.S! I may be wrong, but it seems to me that the duty which this responsibility entails is not so much that of criticising and amending as of fulfilling and illustrating. However, I leave that matter to you. Criticisms are valuable, and we own a great deal to those which have reached us from one or another of you. I rather dislike the idea of a little cabal among you meeting with the express purpose of criticism, but, on the one hand, that may be a matter of personal idiosyncrasy on my part, and on the other, it is quite likely that you see with me eye to eye in this matter. *from time to time*  
In either case we can all pray that we may be enabled as a body to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. One thing I should like to urge upon you - that we are engaged in a reform movement, and such a movement is like a ship at sea, it must be under one Captain. When I am no longer here, the rule of the one Captain must still prevail to secure the sort of homogeneity which we all perceive in the work of the P.U.S. We have a tremendous task before us. If we think we know things that should help to make good citizens, why we must spread the light which we have, and must also keep our own lantern bright so that each one of us in her place may illustrate to the full what the P.U.S. means.

*task*  
I know that these are uneasy times. One of your number has sent in the sort of criticism that is really helpful; she invites "some discussion on our future position with regard to the

Education Act. It seems to me that we, especially those of us who have god schools and classes, will need to know how we stand in the future when such changes are about" This is a most legitimate cause of uneasiness, and I think fully accounts for various questions that have been raised. In Section 28 of the Education Act we read, "The Board of Education must be furnished by July 1st with the name, address, and a short description of every school of which hitherto the State has had no cognizance." That is sufficiently intimidating is it not? But I think I may venture to offer you a side-light which is cheering. An ally and fellow-worker of ours, whom I may not name, had occasion to see a rather great man at the Board of Education and adds, "He surprised me by saying that he wanted to ask me some questions about our P.N.E.U. schools. The really interesting and important point is that he is very anxious to see the method taken up in the lower forms of the Secondary Schools, and wanted to know if I could do anything. I told him that I thought not at the moment unless, perhaps, indirectly, and I said that if he wished to see it done he might get his inspectors to do a little missionary work." I venture to quote this passage, without names, because I think it will be really cheering for you. The fact is, that the Board of Education is dissatisfied with methods which spend their force on the few head boys or girls who are going in for a public examination, and they wish to secure that the "lower forms," that is, boys and girls under fifteen, should do work which they know is efficacious. We are not satisfied with this degree of scope, because we think that the reading in Forms V and VI is a quite invaluable asset; so in the practising school we propose to compromise by going on with the usual P.U.S. work until the girls are in their eighteenth year, that is, have turned 17; then we receive them into a matriculation class for one or two terms as may be found necessary. We shall be able to let you know later if the P.U.S., even under the disadvantage of a weekly change of teachers, qualifies girls for this course, and in the meantime you will be able to see their examination papers for last term. Education is the handmaid of religion and we may not make it an affair of the market, but at the same time we must not reach less than the common market standard in any one respect. We remember the fate of the men who laid irreverent hands upon the ark, and we, an insignificant body of by no means important people, are permitted to bear the ark of promise into the future.

House of Education students have great advantages in P.U.E. work, so much so that, though other governesses turn out capital sets of examination papers, I always feel regretfully that you only are qualified to give the rich full life, out-of-door and in, which is due to children. But is it not just possible that you have the faults of your qualities? Other people do just as they are requested because I suppose they feel they must walk warily in terra incognita, and the results are often admirable.



But you, beloved people, have, as the Americans say, "been there."  
\* Not a few of you have brilliant powers which you are anxious to spend freely on your pupils, and it is a serious act of self-abnegation to allow the man in the book to say without interruption his say without interruption and as much as possible without elucidation. What are we for then? says the teacher who is conscious of natural power and trained performance. Well, you are even more than you think you are. You are persons of such extraordinary weight that a single interjectional remark of yours may go with your pupil to the end of his days. Let the book have full scope, do not bolster it with other books, let a lesson mean work from the children, and not talk from the teacher, and you will get results which are to be judged of at every stage by their scrupulous accuracy, accuracy in speaking, in writing, in composition, in the statement of facts. Knowledge will take care of itself, but it rests with us to insist upon accuracy; and if this is true of general subjects it is more especially true of language and mathematics. You will say that we give much less time to mathematics than does the ordinary school; that is partly because every subject that we take plays such an important part in education that it is difficult to know what to leave out; but also it is because your children are in the habit of working with complete attention and therefore of doing double the usual work in a given time. I think this is as true of mathematics as of anything else, if I may judge by the close attention paid during criticism lessons in this subject. But the programme is not compulsory. If any mistress desire to gain more time for mathematics by leaving our some other subject it is within her power to do so; I think though the children would suffer, and I should advise her to gain the same end by securing concentrated and accurate work in the time set. It distresses me that more of your pupils do not take Latin; I know that parents are slack about this subject for their girls, and have a right and natural desire that home education should be in touch with life. They greatly prize their children's knowledge of history, of literature, of the birds of the air and the flowers of the field, of the hundred and one subjects we take in the school; but there are some subjects to which no immediate interest attaches. You can talk about Frederick Barbarossa or about falling stars but not easily about logarithms or the uses of the Dative. The powers that be are beginning to understand that this question of interest is a legitimate one. Children should learn what interests us all and should not labour to develop "faculties" which do not exist. The mind does all that sort of work for itself. Our point should be not to convince parents that a mathematical or linguistic grind is valuable to children, but that Latin also is very interesting, that the girl or boy that never gets beyond one book of "Caesar" has avenues of interest and pleasure opened that would have been shut to him without that one book. In a word, all our education must be living education.

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I cannot tell you how much pleasure I take in your gift of introducing and interpreting nature to your pupils. Such peculiar intimacy and such dear delight in birds, flowers, mosses and lichens, fossils and landscape, is not, I think, to be found else-where, and I am grateful to the members of the College staff who gave to most of you those happy introductions which you have so generously improved. It is a little appalling when a mother writes for a student who is able to teach her children "bird-nesting," but what the dear lady really wanted was that her children should know birds!

I should like to thank those of you who have shared their precious gift of nature knowledge with children in elementary schools; it is blessed to receive but and more blessed to give, and the delightful give and take that goes on between you and Miss Drury and Miss Kitching, for example, brightens many a laborious day at Scale How.

I should like too to give a word of specially grateful thanks to perhaps a dozen old students who have done definite and valuable work in our elementary school campaign. Some have succeeded in definitely starting schools; some have done immense work in organising campaigns; some have interested school inspectors and local authorities; some have not only started schools, but are nursing mothers to those schools and carry them delightfully over all their difficulties. In fact, these representative people, a score or so perhaps rather than a dozen, give us the happy feeling that in you we have an organising centre in an immense number of neighbourhoods; for what one has done everyone is I know ready to do should circumstances allow. And one thing everybody does, she interests her "poster" and "postess" so deeply that there is a widespread sense of our national importance in the cause of education. It is not easy to pick out a few names where so much really splendid work has been done, but I should like to mention Miss Brownell, Miss East and Miss Butler, Miss Strachan, the two Miss Frosts, Miss Moffatt, Miss J.R. Smith, Miss Eleanor Smith, Miss Gertrude Bell, Miss de Putron, Miss Beatrice Goode and Miss Couchman, Miss Kinnear, and Miss Panter, who deserve special mention for invaluable service to our cause. Some of you, too, write quite charming papers for the Parents' Review. We all remember with gratitude Mrs. Brittlebank's, Miss Edith Frost's and Miss Allen's Art papers which have been greatly appreciated by outsiders. Dear Miss King, whose illness we all regret, gave us those spontaneous geology papers; Miss Sophie Smyth and Miss Owen will be remembered for their very delightful nature papers; Miss Pennethorne has many papers to her name, as have others whom I cannot at the moment recall, even with Miss Kitching's help; and what charming "Baby" papers we have had from some of you who are mothers, notably Mrs. Hughes-Jones and Mrs Pyper. The Portfolio offers us another list of invaluable helpers - Miss Gore, Miss Loveday and Miss Allen (again!) Time fails me to tell of other helpers

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who have beaten up members, addressed meetings and held up a standard of work to wistful mothers in India;

among you who have won the gratitude of all of us, for example, the successive editors of L'UMILE PIANTA and of the Children's Quarterly and more especially the dear and faithful Secretary of your Association and Miss Young, her always ready helper. We must not forget either, our fellow helpers in India; we call X to mind especially Mrs. Tasker, Miss Bruce Low, Miss Loveday and Miss Rhodes; we at home do not forget these and others stationed at the outposts of empire. Then there is the fine-spirited work which some of you have done as Scout Captains, notably Mrs. Tasker and Miss Curry. There are others whose good works I do not remember at the moment, but I must say a word of the real service which Miss Bernau has done to the cause of education in editing and seeing through the press Mrs. W. Epps' book about the British Museum, and in adding to it her own most inspiring and educative Book of Centuries. This is a very valuable asset, and I hope Miss Parish will show you some books done by the children of an L.C.C. school which afford both delight and impulse. But how incomplete would be any attempt to record the work of students without mentioning the labours of a lady whom we may not in the circumstances name, but whose P.U.S. propaganda, in which Miss Wix joined later with perhaps equal success, is amongst the most successful and delightful with which any return movement could be blessed. I may not venture to say a word about the personal qualities which make each of these ladies a persona grata wherever she goes. You must get the tale from themselves, and also get from Miss Wix some account of her very important Sunday School campaign.

Truly you who belong to the House of Education are citizens of no mean city. Freely you have received and most liberally have you given. And the secret of this fine roll of work and workers is, I think, your loyalty to your old College. Pass it on, keep us bound together with one heart and one purpose; make it known to every new student in the future that she is entering on a heart service to which she must give herself up with full faith; that there cannot be affection and disaffection, the two will not go together; that, seeing that we do not live always in the kingdom of heaven, there are sure to be small matters for criticism, but that for her own sake she had better not let her attention or her talk dwell upon these; for loyalty is the hallmark of character, and while we live in this world we must needs give our loyalty in generous excess of the deserts of that to which we are loyal.

You have held up our hands in the past; never has a student failed to do the thing she has been asked to do for the common good. You have sent us your sisters and your pupils to be trained; in fact your zeal and your enthusiasm keep the College going; and believe me this fine loyalty of yours is, if not the white flower of a blameless life, at any rate as fair a decoration as is given to any of us to bear.



I am afraid I have written you a very long letter, but how long I should have made it, if I had said all there is to be said!

So wishing you a very happy Conference, very happy hours up here in this beautiful school which Mr. Lewis has been kind enough to put at your disposal, happy hours at Scale How, gay and happy hours in the open, and enrichment for the days to come,

I remain, your always loving and grateful friend,

CHARLOTTE MASON.

P.S. One of your number, Mrs. Brittlebank, wrote to me some time ago offering a very important suggestion and one which is supported by Old Girls in the school. Both students and old pupils seem to think that a regulated course of reading such as that offered in programme VI, only with more modern books also, would be of use. Our kind friend Mrs. Franklin and I were talking the matter over the other day and sketching a scheme which I hope you will hear more of later.



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Monday, 1st May.

OUR PRINCIPLES

Miss Mason

a/ The Parents Review has been in existence for thirty years and more, and so has the Parents Union School. Our principles are like leaven and have been spreading all this time. You, dear people are torch-bearers, bearing the light. It is not because we are clever, not because we know more, but because it has been our good fortune that Philosophy of Education has come our way, our vocation has led us. We have received a call and are working on principles not worked on before. There is no cause for vanity on our part. If you picked up a bracelet lying by the way it would be no credit to you. It is precisely the case with us. These principles are picked up, found, a find which is no one's property, they belong to all who have wit enough to take them. Mr. Household writes that there is no longer need to invite the masters and mistresses in Gbustershire to join the P.U.S., they rush in of their own accord. The society's principles spread so widely and are so impressive that it is a veritable P.M.E.U. conflagration. We recognise the No other principles are so universally applicable. We recognise the Holy Ghost as the supreme educator of mankind. On us lies the serious duty of preserving it intact, of acting on it ourselves, and of spreading it. Reading and narrating - it sounds absurdly easy. Other methods may use the reading but they do not make the same use of narration. They have not understood the principles under which it is carried out. It is applicable to children of all ages, of all classes; it leaves out no subject, class, or caste. Other people read - no narration comes.

To summarise briefly the principles underlying the method. We believe the child is a person. From the first he shows his mind and individuality. He learns a language. A child, with one parent English, the other German, missionaries in Northern Africa, could speak three languages at the age of three, and he could discriminate, never speaking anything but Arabic to his nurse. English to his English parent, and German to the other. A child learns more in the first two or three years of life than in any equal period later on. The quantity of knowledge he amasses is amazing. His affections, sense of love and justice, are there from the beginning, and the fact that a baby can blush when reproved shows the moral sense of a person. Enormous provision is made in every child for the individuality of a person.

All analogy is very imperfect, but bearing this in mind the analogy of the physical body and mind holds good. The body

requires regular meals, daily food; so does the mind; as in the body the complete processes of assimilation and digestion go on without our knowledge, so do the similar processes of the mind work. If we think about our food and decide to live on tablets, we soon become poor things. We need to take food regularly and not think about it afterwards. A power the mind possesses and on it everything depends. Just as the body has a mouth for receiving food, the mind has attention, therefore to talk of training the attention is rubbish, it does not need encouragement, it can be left alone. Attention, judgment, reason; the so-called faculties of mind, work as unconsciously as the digestion of the body. Mind cannot live without food.

It is an error to suppose that the mind lives on exercise. The body cannot live on exercises. Does a boy get no education by hoeing turnips? you ask, and no one has the courage to answer: "No." Does a boy get no education by attending to the intricacies of watch-making? you ask, and no one has the courage to answer: "No." Exercise is not food. Mathematical Science is only open to those who have natural gifts: what may be called Literary Science, of which there is little in English, but such as the work of Flammion and Fabre in French, is open to everybody. As regards the Humanities, all persons can enjoy History, Literature, Travel. It is a mistake to give gymnastics instead of food. A mind cannot live on Grammar, Mathematics and Science. On such a diet it will perish (everlastingly). We know that power not used will go. A limb not used atrophies. A mind which has no nourishment will atrophy, fed on a fashion rag or sporting paper this is the result. Mind wants knowledge as the body wants food. Therefore we must read books. Desultory reading is very interesting and very delightful, but is not enough. We must read and narrate, if necessary narrate to ourselves, but people will be willing to listen if we can reproduce definitely and accurately, not vaguely and generally.

Returning to the analogy of Mind and Body. As the mouth opens to receive food, the mind opens to receive intellectual food. Before food enters the mouth, the palate must be titillated and appealed to, to set the juices flowing, the food must smell pleasant and have an agreeable taste. All text books and cram books and extracts fail in this respect and do not feed the mind. A book of General Knowledge is given to a boy for the holidays, he manages to acquire some of the information and commits it to memory. I do not know what it is, a sort of spurious power of the mind. That is not the way the mind is reached. As Ruskin said:

"They cram to pass and not to know,  
They do pass and they don't know."